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## The Otepka Gag

State Department officials, who have allowed a security scandal to blossom under their feet, are now trying to gag Otto Otepka, the ex-chief of the Evaluations Division of the department's Security Office who was barred from his duties and his own files last June 27. Otepka, a career civil service officer honored by the late John Foster Dulles, was fired from his job when he revealed to the Senate Internal Security subcommittee that the Kennedy Administration had rendered the security section of the State Department almost useless by destroying its central filing system, eliminating top security experts and placing actual security risks in strategic positions. Otepka, however, is still on the department payroll pending a hearing before an appeals board.

The department, with an eye toward the November elections, is presently trying to silence Otepka through a series of devices. In a July 2 letter to Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration William J. Crockett, Otepka asked permission to accept an invitation to speak before the GOP Platform Committee in San Francisco. Shortly afterwards, he asked permission to accept an invitation by Sen. Milward Simpson (R-Wyo.) to appear on the senator's weekly radio broadcast.

Crockett, after first notifying newsmen, wrote Otepka that the Civil Service Commission advised that he would risk "possible violation of the Hatch Act"—which forbids political activity by federal employees—if he accepted either invitation.

Crockett and the Civil Service, however, were hardly overly worried about the Hatch Act when Otepka received a phone call from Crockett's office in May requesting Otepka, a career civil service officer, to kick in money to Johnson's \$100-a-plate dinner held May 26 in the National Guard Armory. The purpose of that occasion, of course, was to raise money for the Democratic National Committee.

While an appearance by Otepka before the GOP Platform Committee and on Simpson's radio broadcast could technically be considered a violation of the Hatch Act, his friends feel this would be justified because the State Department for 12 months has refused to give Otepka the appeals board hearing he desires. Thus, his only means of refuting continued State Department attacks against him is to bring his side of the matter before the public.

If he does, however, the State Department hints it will get him for violation of federal law.

- Six security personnel loyal to Otepka who were relieved from their security work in the State Department 17 weeks ago are either twiddling their

thumbs with nothing to do or being ruthlessly harassed by the department. The department has attempted to boot out one of the six by declaring him "emotionally unstable." Department officials claim he expressed himself too much on behalf of Otepka, thus becoming emotionally unfit.